

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

IO-04 PRS-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EUR-08 SAJ-01

EA-06 DRC-01 /062 W

----- 091292

R 081600Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4382

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 13474

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: INDIA-PAKISTAN OUTLOOK ON EVE OF SECRETARY'S
VISIT

REF: NEW DELHI 2779, 11244, 12376, 12589

SUMMARY: INDIA AND PAKISTAN SEEM TO BE MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD
A RELATIONSHIP WHICH WILL EXHIBIT THE OUTWARD TRAPPINGS OF
NORMALCY BUT BENEATH WHICH CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION WILL
REMAIN. INDIA, WHILE PLEASED THAT PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZA-
TION HAS RESUMED, IS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT IT VIEWS AS A
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CONTINUING "TOUGH" PAKISTANI POSITION ON KASHMIR, ON

AFGHANIZTAN AND ON INDIA'S NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. MANY INDIAN OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS PROFESS THAT PAKISTAN IS STILL A CREDIBLE TRHREAT TO INDIA. THE GOERNMENT CONTINUES, HOWEVER, TO PROCEED PIECEMEAL TOWARD NORMALIZATION, TESTING THE WATER TEMPERATURE AS IT GOES BUT PREPARED TO DRAW BACK AT ANY OLIMMR OF PAKISTANI TRUCULENCOM END SUMMARY.

1. WE FIND THAT OUR ESTIMATES OF THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM TRENDS IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS HAVE NOT CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE DISPATCH OF THE REFERENCED TELEGRAMS. THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK IS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION (NEW DELHI 12376), BUT THE LONGER-TERM OUTLOOK CONTINUES LESS OPTIMISTIC (NEW DELHI 2779).

2. SHORT-TERM SITUATION: POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINKS, SEVERED SINCE 1965, WILL RESUME ABOUT OCTOBER 15. ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXPANDED TRAVEL BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE TAKING LONGER TO WORK OUT. INDIA SENT PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT ON TRAVEL TO ISLAMABAD SEPTEMBER 17 BUT HAS ONLY RECENTLY RECEIVED A REPLY THROUGH THE SWISS, AND THAT WAS GRABLED. INDIA DOES NOT WANT TO STATION INDIANS IN THE SWISS EMBASSY IN ISLAMABAD TO HANDLE THE VISA WORKLOAD AT THIS TIME, ALTHOUGH IT ANTICIPATES THIS MAY BE NECESSARY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE AN EXPANSION FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF TRAVEL OF A HUNDRED OR SO PERSONS EACH WAY A MONTH, MOSTLY RELATIVES VISITING FOR DEATHS OR WEDDINGS, TO AT LEAST THE PRE-1971 LEVEL OF A THOUSAND OR SO A MONTH, IF NOT MORE. (THE ISLAMABAD AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR VISIT OF 20 RELIGIOUS GROUPS PER YEAR ALONE.) NEXT WILL COME TALKS ON CIVIL AVIATION LINKS AND OVERFLIGHTS WHICH THE GOI HAS PROPOSED FOR LATE OCTOBER IN NEW DELHI BUT THUS FAR RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FOR ISLAMABAD. BEYOND THAT THINGS BECOME FUZZY, ALTHOUGH THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE REITERATED THEIR INTEREST IN TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS MAY OCCUR SOMEWHERE IN THE COURSE OF ALL OF THIS--AFTER RESUMPTION OF AIR LINKS AND OVERFLIGHTS, AND POSSIBLY ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS TRADE IS RESUMED. INDIA SEES DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS MORE AS A SYMBOL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF NORMALIZATION THAN AS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE PROCESS. IT STRESSES THAT THE "ATMOSPHERE" CONFIDENTIAL

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MUST BE RIGHT FOR RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND THAT DIPLOMATIC MISSION MUST THEMSELVES BE ASSURED OF "NORMAL" TREATMENT.

3. LONGER-TERM OUTLOOK: ELEMENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE GOI CONTINUE SKEPTICAL ABOUT PAKISTANI INTENTIONS TOWARD AFGHANISTAN AND KASHMIR. AT AN MINIMUM, THEY SEE PAKISTAN AS HAVING A CAPABILITY TO BESMIRCH INDIA INTERNATIONALLY BY

ALLEGING INDIAN COLLUSION WITH AFGHANISTAN, INDIAN VIOLATION OF THE SIMLA AGREEMENT AND OF UN RESOLUTIONS IN KASHMIR, OR AND INDIAN NUCLEAR "THREAT". THIS, TOGETHER WITH WHAT PAKISTAN CAN SAY ABOUT SIKKIM, BANGLADESH AND HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS WITHIN INDIA, IS WHAT INDIA MEANS WHEN IT TALKS ABOUT THE "ATMOSPHERE" OF INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS. INDIAN OFFICIALS FEEL PAKISTANI PROPAGANDA AGAINST INDIA HAS AGAIN INCREASED SINCE THE ISLAMABAD TALKS LAST MONTH. INDIANS ARE ALSO NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCED THAT, BESIDES MAKING PROPAGANDA, BHUTTO MIGHT NOT ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT AFGHANISTAN OR KASHMIR. THEY SEE A PAKISTANI MILITARY MACHINE STILL ABLE TO THREATEN INDIAN TERRITORY FOR A SHORT PERIOD. AND THEY NOTE THAT PAKISTANI STRENGTH CAN GROW WITH MODERN ARMS BOUGHT BY ARAB OIL MONEY. THEY ALSO SEE SIGNS OF RENEWED SOVIET INTEREST IN PAKISTAN, WHICH REMINDS THEM OF THE SOVIET TANK SALES TO PAKISTAN IN THE LATE 1960'S. FINALLY, THEY CAN NEVER FORGET PAKISTAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA'S ADVERSARY, CHINA--EVEN THOUGH CHINA FAILED TO INTERVENE IN EITHER THE 1965 OR 1971 INDO-PAK WARS.

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-10 EA-07 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02

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/054 W

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R 081600Z OCT 74

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4. AFGHANISTAN: BHUTTO'S RECENT POSTURE TOWARD AFGHANISTAN MADE INDIA VERY EDGY AND RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF VERBAL INDIAN SUPPORT FOR AFGHANISTAN. SHOULD BHUTTO UNDERTAKE A "MILITARY ADVENTURE" AGAINST AFGHANISTAN, INDIA WOULD PROBABLY MAKE A SHOW OF STRENGTH ALONG ITS OWN BORDER WITH PAKISTAN TO HELP TIE DOWN SOME PAKISTANI FORCES. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT DOES NOT ENCOURAGE AFGHAN INITIATIVES AGAINST PAKISTAN AND PROBABLY ACTIVELY DISCOURAGES THEM ON OCCASION--PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY MIGHT UPSET INDO-PAK NEGOTIATIONS. (SEE NEW DELHI 12610 NOTAL.)

5. KASHMIR: IT NOW APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT MRS. GANDHI AND SHEIKH ABDULLAH WILL REACH AN AGREEMENT ON A REVISION OF KASHMIR'S "STATUS" BEFORE NEXT YEAR AT THE EARLIEST. THUS
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THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT OF AN INDIAN FAIT ACCOMPLI TO WHICH BHUTTO MIGHT FEEL HE WOULD HAVE TO REACT. (SEE NEW DELHI 12589.) THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM ASIDE, INDIA HOPES ULTIMATELY TO MAKE THE EXISTING LINE OF CONTROL IN KASHMIR THE INTERNATIONAL FRONTIER. IT WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE THE REMNANT OF UN INVOLVEMENT /THE MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP IN KASHMIR) BUT DOES NOT WANT TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN THE UN, WHICH IT WOULD HAVE TO DO TO FORCE THEIR WITHDRAWAL. IT IS SKEPTICAL THAT BHUTTO CAN AGREE TO ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT ON KASHMIR BUT HOPES GENERAL PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION WILL HELP.

6. NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS: INDIA HAS IN EFFECT REJECTED PAKISTAN'S PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE LIMITED TO THE SUBCONTINENT. INDIAN OFFICIALS CLAIM INDIA CAN DO NOTHING TO AFFECT THE PAKISTANI NUCLEAR PROGRAM. THE INDIAN OFFER DURING THE ISLAMABAD TALKS TO ALLOW PAKISTANI SCIENTISTS TO EXAMINE THE RESULTS OF THE INDIAN TEST AND THE VISIT THE INDIAN ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER WAS INTENDED ONLY TO REINFORCE THE GENERAL ASSURANCES INDIA HAS ALREADY GIVEN PAKISTAN. (SEE NEW DELHI 12839.)

7. IRAN AND THE GULF STATES: INDIAN DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN DEALING WITH PAKISTAN'S "ALLIES". INDIAN OVERTURES TO CHINA HAVE GOTTEN NOWHERE, BUT INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS HAVE MADE MARKED PROGRESS IN THE LAST YEAR AND PROBABLY SIGNIFICANTLY EASED INDIAN FEARS OF A PAKISTANI-IRANIAN ENTENTE AGAINST INDIA. INDIAN ACTIVITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF ARAB STATES HAS ALSO BEEN STEPPED UP AND, ASIDE FROM POTENTIAL OIL BENEFITS, MAY ALSO HAVE SERVED TO BLUNT PAKISTANI VENTURES IN THAT AREA.

8. US POLICY: INDIA IS SATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT US
ATTITUDE TOWARD INDO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS. THE INDIANS SEE THIS
AS CONFIRMING INDIA'S CURRENT POSITION IN THE SUBCONTINENT;
CONVEYS NEUTRALITY AND NONINVOLVEMENT OVER KASHMIR AND SUPPORT
FOR SETTLEMENT OF SUBCONTINENT PROBLEMS BY THE STATES
INVOLVED; AND AVOIDS THE PROBLEMS OF ARMS SUPPLY TO PAKISTAN,
WHICH SYMBOLIZED US SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN AGAINST INDIA IN THE
PAST. AS A RESULT OF IMPROVED INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS, THE
INDIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CRYPTO HAS ALSO BECOME MORE RELAXED.
THE INDIANS WOULD BE GREATLY CONCERNED IF US
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POLICY WERE TO BE CHANGED IN ANY OF THE KEY AREAS DESCRIBED
ABOVE AND WOULD HOPE AND EXPECT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WILL
PROVIDE ASSURANCES THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE13474
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740290-0352
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741064/aaaacchl.tel
Line Count: 243
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: NEW DELHI 2779, 11244, 12376, 12589
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIA-PAKISTAN OUTLOOK ON EVE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005